

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

**RONALD J. TENPAS
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY**

Nine Executive Drive, Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208, Telephone (618) 628-3700

For Immediate Release

MAY 5, 2004

Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on April 6, 2004, **ANDREW MEREDITH**, age 35, of Mt. Vernon, Illinois, was named in a one count Indictment returned by a Federal Grand Jury sitting in Benton, Illinois.

The Indictment charged that on or about February 12, 2004, in Jefferson County, MEREDITH did knowingly and intentionally possess with the intent to distribute 50 grams or more of a mixture or substance containing cocaine base, commonly called "crack cocaine", in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1) and 841(b)(1)(A).

MEREDITH faces a penalty of 10 years to life imprisonment, a fine of up to \$4,000,000, and a term of supervised release of not less than 5 years.

An indictment is a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury. The case is set for trial on June 14, 2004, in United States District Court in Benton, Illinois.

The investigation in this case was a cooperative effort between the Joint Narcotics Unit of the Mt. Vernon Police Department and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies pursuant to their participation in the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative. In addition, the Jefferson County States Attorney's Office has assisted throughout the investigation.

Project Safe Neighborhoods is a joint and cooperative effort of the United States Attorney's Office, the Jefferson County State's Attorney's Office, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and Illinois State Police directed at removing guns and drugs from our communities.

The case is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney George Norwood.